

EPA, DOT challenge employers

Agencies ask businesses to get on the commuting bandwagon

BY MARGARET M. CLARK

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) are challenging employers across the country to implement a federally initiated commuter program by Aug. 3.

The Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative (CCLI) agreement calls for employers voluntarily to meet a National Standard of Excellence for employer-provided commuter benefits. Specifically, employers must promote and provide a range of commuter benefits, and provide access to a "guaranteed ride home" for employees who do not drive alone to work, plus three additional commuter benefits (e.g., shuttle transportation from transit stations and compressed work schedules).

Employers also must meet or exceed a minimum level of 14 percent of employees who do not drive alone to work, designate a specific contact person for the program and centralize commuter benefit information within the organization so it is easy for employees to find and use.

Program origination

CCLI repackages the federal government-driven commuter choice program that has been in place for a number of years, transforming it

into a more market-based solution. Employers are expected to perceive the economic advantages of providing environmentally friendly commuter benefits and to build them into their employer-of-choice campaigns. Companies that execute the agreement will be recognized later in the month as CCLI charter members at the ACT (Association for Commuter Transportation) 2001 International Conference in Portland, Ore.

The agencies piloted the program last fall among a dozen private and public employers. Among them was Pitney Bowes, a national office solutions company, headquartered in Stamford, Conn. Ed Houghton, director of employee relations and work/life, describes CCLI as "a real opportunity for organizations to partner with government agencies and other companies to share ideas and collaborate." It's better than being regulated, he said.

Margo Oge, EPA's director of transportation and air quality, said, "Commuter Choice employers represent the best of what corporate America contributes to our society—showing that a healthy balance sheet and a healthy environment are not mutually exclusive. They are models of environmental leadership for other companies to follow."

Program support

DOT and EPA will provide technical assistance and public recognition for employers' commuter friendly, environmentally responsible practices. Available help includes a series of more than 20 information briefs on how to implement various commuter benefits.

Currently being developed is a web-based tool that will enable companies to assess the financial, environmental and traffic impacts of their commuter benefits. EPA's goal is to have it online by the end of the summer.

The EPA/DOT team also will help employers enhance their commuter benefits offerings by staging conference calls and regional get-togethers for information sharing. In addition, the agencies have contracted with the American Management Association (AMA) to develop a one-day training curriculum on how to create a commuter benefits program.

A brochure explaining CCLI and containing an application form was included in the Society for Human Resource Management's July membership mailing. For additional information and application forms, call the Commuter Choice Hotline at 1-888-856-3131 or email ccli@icfconsulting.com. 

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Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative



For more information call 1-888-856-3131 or email ccli@icfconsulting.com